

Kayukawa Clinic Director's Blog 4
-Special Autumn 2018 Edition-

The long summer of extreme heat, floods, typhoons, and earthquakes that caused widespread damage across the country has finally ended, and autumn is approaching. Fortunately, the Tokai region largely escaped major disasters, but the threat of the Tokai-Nankai megathrust earthquake has been increasing, leaving people understandably uneasy.

Although the weather has cooled, many elderly people have not yet fully recovered from summer fatigue, and some are catching colds.

Still, it is the season of autumn flavors—chestnuts, grapes, Pacific saury, and oysters are especially delicious—and it is also the time when warm dishes like oden and horumon (offal) hot pot become particularly appealing.

On September 1, 2018, “Sleep Day,” I gave a public lecture for citizens on the theme, *“Preventing Suicide Among Children.”* Following the lecture, Toshimi Konaka, a reporter from the Chunichi Shimbun, requested an interview. In mid-September, Reporter Konaka visited Kayukawa Clinic twice to conduct the interview. She asked a wide range of questions: where I was born and raised, why I became a doctor, why I chose psychiatry, what I aim to achieve through my work, and even about my hobbies.

With the patients’ permission, she attended some consultations and took several photographs from the patients’ perspective. The article appeared in the Chunichi Shimbun ten days later. After its publication, I received messages from friends, acquaintances, seniors, and outpatients saying, *“I read it.”*

Over the past 20 years, I have been interviewed by several newspapers, including the Nihon Keizai Shimbun (reporter Masami Nakamura, on sleep disorders) and the Yomiuri Shimbun (reporter Naoki Kato, on university students’ mental health). On some occasions, professional photographers accompanied the reporter and instructed me to pose in various ways.

I am always impressed by how professional journalists can condense the vast information gathered over nearly two hours of interviewing into an article of about 800 characters that summarizes the modest history and present of a single doctor.

Below is the article by Reporter Konaka, published online:

<http://www.chunichi.co.jp/article/feature/iryuu/ijinden/CK2018092502000274.html>

Kayukawa Clinic (Naka Ward, Nagoya)

Director and Psychiatrist Yuhei Kayukawa (69)

Continuing Efforts to Prevent Karoshi (Death from Overwork)

From the standpoint of a psychiatrist, Dr. Yuhei Kayukawa has long been engaged in research on sleep disorders, workplace mental health, and the problem of karoshi. After retiring as head of the Nagoya Institute of Technology Health Center, he opened his own clinic at the age of 65. Located inside a commercial building in the bustling downtown area, the clinic is visited by a wide range of patients—from young people suffering from depression to elderly individuals with dementia.

Although consultation times are not long, he listens carefully to each patient's life situation. One woman in her forties, suffering from hypersomnia, explained that she was burdened with heavy responsibilities at work and found it impossible to rest her mind even when off duty. Dr. Kayukawa told her, *"You're working at the point of burnout. Try lowering your pace to about 80 percent. Work for 90 minutes, then take a break."* He never fails to offer concrete advice, guided by his belief that *"a doctor's role is to work together with patients to confront illness."* When symptoms are severe, he states frankly, *"This is serious."*

The roots of his empathy go back to his childhood. He grew up in a boarding house run by his family in Hagiwara (now part of Gero City, Gifu Prefecture). A shy boy, he was unable to attend kindergarten and instead spent his days at the local movie theater. In elementary school, he often went to class in tears. When he suffered a major injury—falling into a river and needing fifteen stitches in his knee—he was treated by his uncle, a surgeon, which sparked his interest in medicine. He went on to study at Nagoya University's School of Medicine. During high school and university, while reading works on philosophy and psychology, he was first introduced to psychiatry. Intrigued by the many mysteries of mental illness, he decided to dedicate himself to its treatment.

During his residency training—at that time structured so that young doctors rotated through different departments—there was a patient with asthma who always came to the emergency room shortly after four in the morning. That was the very time when doctors on night duty, utterly exhausted, most wanted to sleep. He once asked the patient, *"Why don't you come during the day?"* The man replied, *"I work at a factory during the day. When I get home and go to sleep, I have attacks in the early morning."* Dr. Kayukawa could do nothing but apologize. He later learned that asthma attacks are more likely to occur during shallow stages of sleep, and that there are other conditions which also flare up during nighttime rest. This experience sparked his lasting interest in sleep.

At the psychiatric hospital where he worked for ten years, patients sometimes took their own lives. Driven by a desire to prevent suicide, he joined a group of lawyers researching *karoshi* (death from overwork). He became actively involved in social activities, such as writing expert opinions for lawsuits related to workers' compensation claims.

“Long working hours and stress lead to insomnia, which can in turn cause depression and increase the risk of suicide. People talk about ‘work style reform,’ but the reality is that workers’ health is still being undermined,” he says. He hopes that by continuing his efforts, he can contribute further to society. His love of movies remains strong. He still watches three or four films a week, writes reviews, and even recommends films suited to the symptoms of his patients.

(From the Chunichi Shimbun Morning Edition, September 25, 2018, by reporter Sumimi Konaka)



Dr. Kayukawa often advises his patients with phrases like, *“Don’t overexert yourself,”* and *“Do things in moderation.”*

October 4, 2018

I went to see *“Shut Up and Play the Piano”* at the Million-za theater in Fushimi, Nagoya. To me, art is all about expressing your own sensibility freely, without being tied down by customs or conventions.

Actually, I had planned to watch *“Foxtrot”* instead, but the showtime didn’t fit my schedule. Life doesn’t always go the way we plan, does it?